

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims without prejudice, without admission, without surrender of subject matter, and without any intention of creating any estoppel as to equivalents, as follows.

In the Claims:

1. (Currently amended) A method for preparing powdered fibrous cellulose ethers which consists of:

(a) dispersing an alkalinizing agent into pulverized celluloses to form alkalinized cellulose;

(b) performing a primary reaction on the alkalinized cellulose from (a) by gradually increasing temperature ranging from 40 to 60 °C for 10 to 60 min after adding 0.01-3.0 parts by weight of etherifying agent for 1 part by weight of cellulose to form a primary reaction mixture, wherein a diluent gas is injected to the alkalinized cellulose before adding the etherifying agent and the diluent gas is injected less than 2.5 parts by weight for 1 part by weight of cellulose;

(c) performing a secondary reaction on the primary reaction mixture from (b) gradually increasing temperature ranging from 45 to 75 °C for 60 to 180 min to form a secondary reaction mixture; and

(d) performing a tertiary reaction on the secondary reaction mixture from (c) gradually increasing temperature ranging from 80 to 90 °C for 60 to 180 min, followed by a filtering and drying step, wherein (d) does not include ~~further comprise~~ a grinding step,

thereby producing the powdered cellulose ethers.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the reaction temperatures of the primary, secondary and tertiary reactions are ranging from 40 to 50 °C, 55 to 65 °C, and 85 to 90 °C, respectively.

3. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the etherifying agent is an alkyleneoxide and an ~~or~~ alkylhalide.

4. (Original) The method of claim 3, wherein the alkyleneoxide has carbon atoms ranging from 2 to 4, and the alkylene halide has carbon atoms ranging from 1 to 5.

5. (Currently amended) The method of claim 4 ~~claim 4~~, wherein the alkyleneoxide is selected from the group consisting of ethyleneoxide, propyleneoxide and butyleneoxide and the alkylene halide is selected from the group consisting of methylchloride, ethylchloride, propylchloride and butylchloride ~~which further comprises injecting a diluent gas before adding an etherifying agent.~~

6. (Original) The method of claim 5, wherein the diluent gas is at least one ether compound(s) selected from dimethylether and diethylether.

7-14. (Canceled)

15. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the powdered cellulose ethers have a bulk density ranging from 0.45 to 0.65 g/mL.

16. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the powdered cellulose ethers have a particle distribution rate of greater than 99% for the particles of less than 100 mesh in size.

17. (Cancelled)

18. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the alkalizing agent is alkalimetal hydroxide (caustic soda).

19. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the alkalizing agent is alkalimetal hydroxide (caustic soda) and wherein the powdered cellulose ethers:

have a bulk density ranging from 0.45 to 0.65 g/mL; and

have a particle distribution rate of greater than 99% for the particles of less than 100 mesh in size.

20. (Previously presented) The method of claim 19, which further comprises injecting a diluent gas before adding an etherifying agent and wherein the diluent gas is at least one ether compound(s) selected from dimethylether and diethylether.

21. (New) A method for preparing powdered fibrous cellulose ethers which comprises of:

(a) dispersing an alkalinizing agent into pulverized celluloses to form alkalinized cellulose;

(b) performing a primary reaction on the alkalinized cellulose from (a) gradually increasing temperature ranging from 40 to 60 °C for 10 to 60 min after adding 0.01-3.0 parts by weight of etherifying agent for 1 part by weight of cellulose to form a primary reaction mixture;

(c) performing a secondary reaction on the primary reaction mixture from (b) gradually increasing temperature ranging from 45 to 75 °C for 60 to 180 min to form a secondary reaction mixture; and

(d) performing a tertiary reaction on the secondary reaction mixture from (c) gradually increasing temperature ranging from 80 to 90 °C for 60 to 180 min, wherein (d) does not further comprise a grinding step,

thereby producing the powdered cellulose ethers.